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(54) Abstract Title

A method of collecting information through interactive consumer advertising

(57) A method of collecting information in the form of feedback from a set of consumers whose main personal details are known. Codes 3 are placed in advertisements 2 which the consumer reports to try to win a reward. Using mobile communication devices, e.g. mobile phones 4 which can access the internet, instant feedback of the success of an advertisement campaign can be gained. In one preferred embodiment, entering a web address 1 and an identification code 3 from an advertisement into a WAP phone is sufficient for the consumer to be identified and the claim to the reward to be logged. In another embodiment, a phone prefix 1 and an identification code 3 make up a phone number and the consumer sends a message to that number to claim the reward.

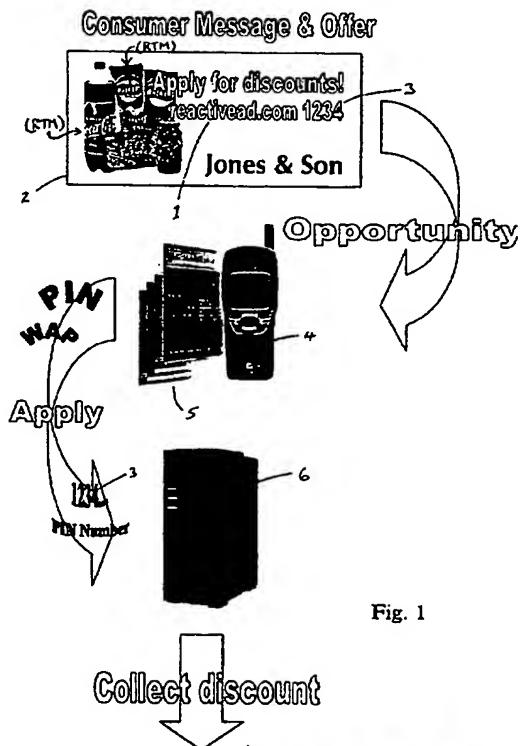


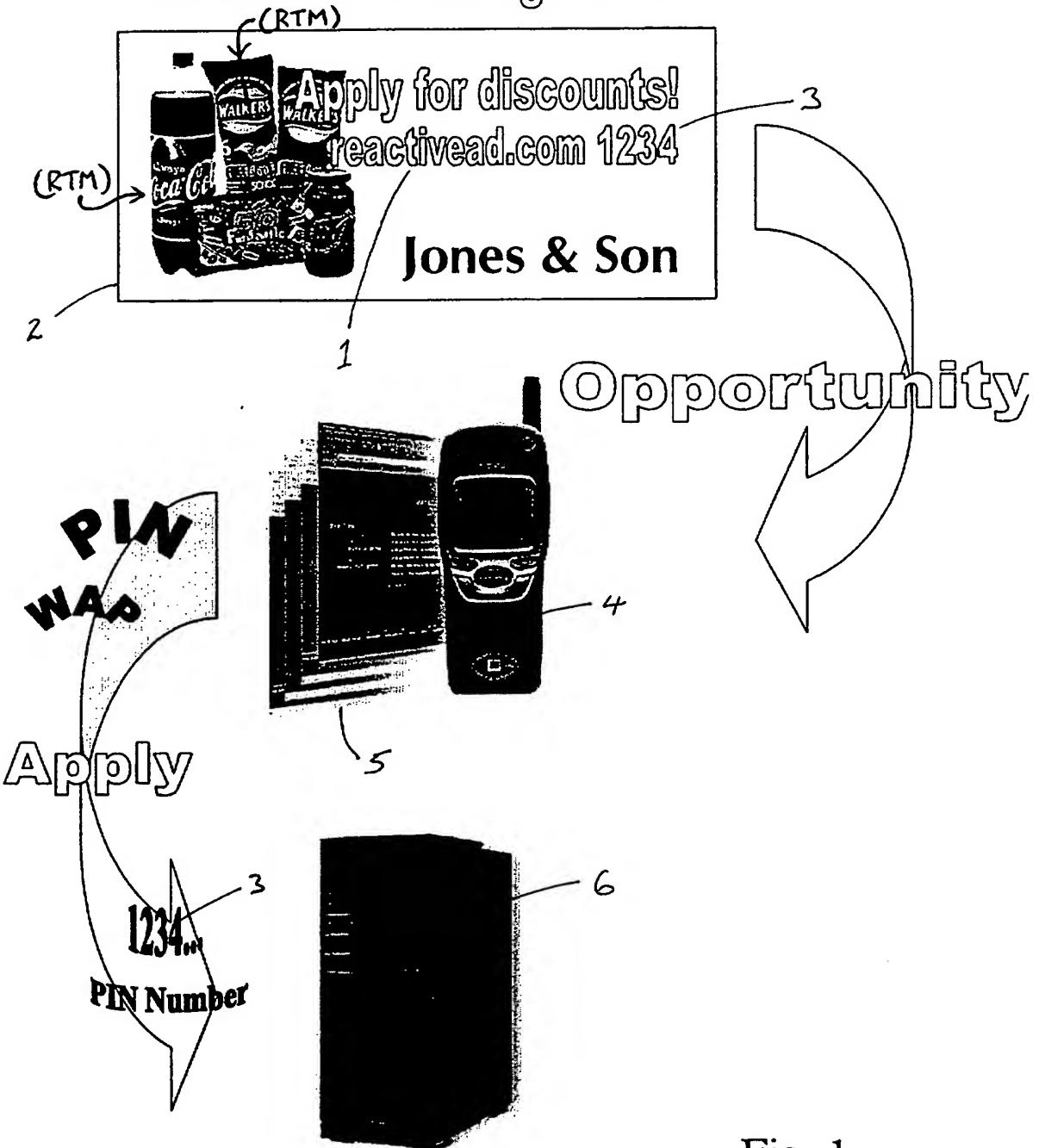
Fig. 1

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The claims were filed later than the filing date but within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1995.

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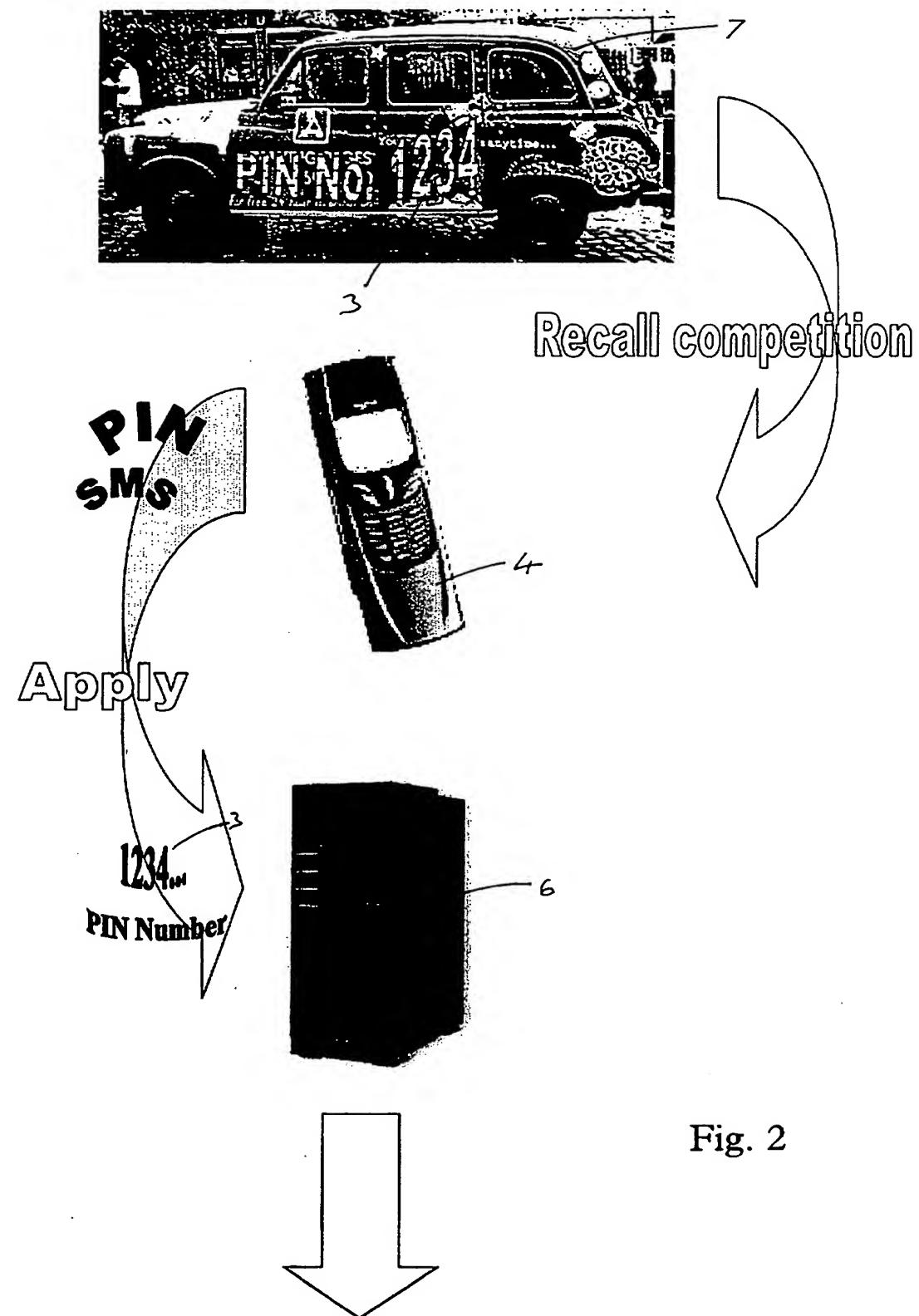
## Consumer Message & Offer



Collect discount

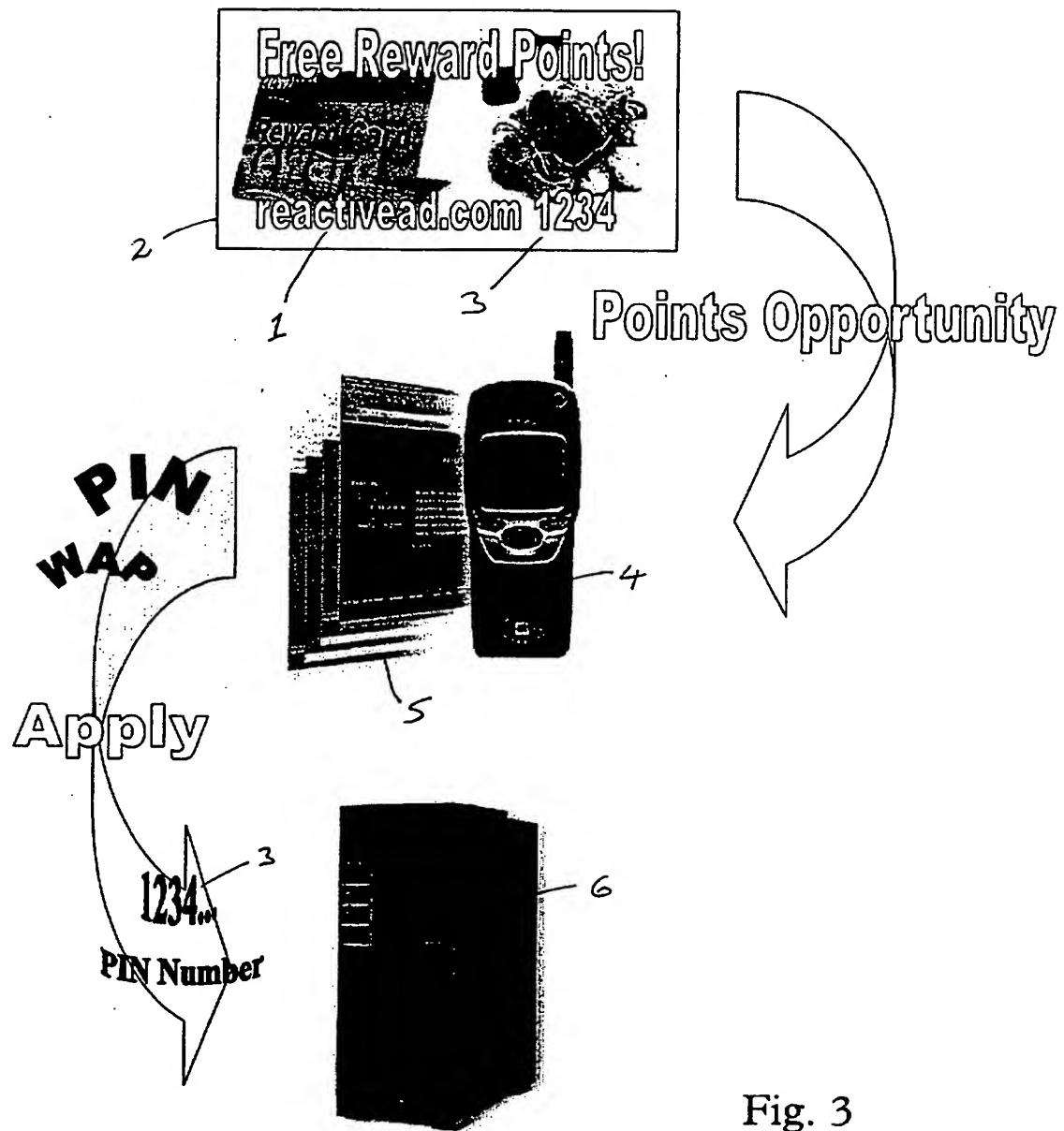
Your discount is applied to your account

## Holiday Competition - PIN Number on Taxi



First applicant to submit wins holiday!

## Consumer Loyalty Offer



Collect reward

Your loyalty points reward is added to your account

73002.609

**A method of collecting information through  
interactive consumer advertising and uses thereof**

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The present specification relates to a method of collecting information through interactive consumer advertising and uses thereof.

Advances in modern advertising methods have led to increased levels of consumer interaction and reward, and the ability to capture highly valuable information on consumer lifestyles and buying behaviours. This had led to increased one-to-one communication with the end user and more effective use of marketing budgets through direct marketing approaches.

It is known to place identification codes in advertisements for jobs, for example, so that the prospective employer can obtain feedback on the placement of the advertisement and determine where best to place an advertisement next time.

In the 1980's, a dungeons and dragons style game was developed using a bar code scanner. The consumer would scan the bar code of various products into the device. Different codes had different effects on the game, in some instances giving the player special weapons or powers, or additional health / energy etc.

Coupons too have been used previously in marketing / promotional campaigns. The coupons, say, ring pulls from special edition cans of drink, are collected by the consumer, and when enough have been collected, the coupons can be exchanged for a toy or other suitable prize.

With the recent developments associated with advertising on the internet, it has become possible for banner advertisements linked to specific promotions, to have a limited ability to track users as they explore further on the web.

There is a desire for an advertiser to know how successful the placement of a particular advertisement has been, for example, which medium, location or time of play was most observed. This information is also useful  
5 to the providers of the advertising mediums to determine the placements most suited to particular audiences and to base their charges on these findings. It is also desirable to correlate that information with personal details of the consumer, for example, their age, marital  
10 status, employment, lifestyle or spending characteristics.

In general terms, therefore, the present invention provides a method of collecting information, comprising:

15 for a plurality of consumers, entering personal details of each consumer into a database of a database provider and issuing each consumer with a contact address with which to access the database provider;  
20 placing an identification code in an advertisement; and  
providing a reward to encourage a consumer to find the identification code and report it to the database provider by using the contact address and submitting the identification code to try to win the reward.

In this way, information may be collected about the  
25 consumers from their registered personal details and the advertisements which they have identified by submission of the identification code as having seen or heard.

Viewed in another way, the present invention provides a method of compiling a database of consumer  
30 details as a result of collecting information as described herein. The present invention also relates to a method of advertising.

The advertisements may be posters, each one having a different identification code embodied somewhere in  
35 the advertisement. If the locations of the poster is known, then it is possible to correlate the whereabouts of registered consumers with locations and times, the

advertising media they have responded to and the successfullness of the advert placement.

The concept is not limited to advertisements in the form of posters, but may use other media such as audio,  
5 newspapers and magazines, television, bill-boards, changing screens, flyers, in fact any form of advertisement in which an identification code can be placed. The identification code may be a number, a word, a URL address (uniform resource location,  
10 accessible via the internet), a string of letters, and / or numbers, a bar code, such as EAN 8, EAN 13 or other format, or any other type of code or symbol which can be used in an advertisement and communicated to the database provider by the consumer. The easier the  
15 identification code can be communicated, the better. Identification numbers, for example, can be submitted easily on a mobile phone or similar device.

The consumer uses a communication device to access the database provider, preferably using an established  
20 electronic device which consumers will already have, but new code scanning and / or message sending devices could be developed for a particular advertisement campaign if so desired. The concept is particularly advantageous when the consumer is encouraged to claim his reward by  
25 accessing the database provider using a mobile device, preferably a mobile phone and in particular one which can access the internet (e.g. a WAP or I-Mode phone), but also a palm pilot or other portable message sending device and the like are also preferred. Preferably, as  
30 part of his personal details, the consumer registers his MSISDN number (mobile station international subscriber device number). In this way, the consumer can be identified automatically from the capture of his MSISDN, e.g., from his SIM card of his mobile phone, when the  
35 database provider is accessed.

It is possible nowadays to determine the whereabouts of a consumer using a mobile device, such as

a mobile phone, through interaction with the local transmitter stations or using GPS. Rather than have posters in known places with individual identification codes, the same identification code can be used on two  
5 or more, even perhaps all, of the posters. When a consumer sees the advertisement and finds the identification code, he can use his mobile phone to access the database provider and submit the identification code. The database provider can capture  
10 his MSISDN to identify the consumer and record the time and location of the consumer using established technology. In the case of advertising by way of posters or similar medium, costs can be saved by having only one or a small number of advertisement designs.

15 Registering with the database provider may be achieved in many ways, for example, filling in a form which is sent by facsimile, post or e-mail to the provider, filling in details at a web address, by telephone or in person through talking to a  
20 representative of the database provider or a combination of any of these. The more personal details that are registered, the better, but certain types of personal information will be more important to certain advertisers. An advertisement for a particular product,  
25 for example, would be of no use if it is only noticed by people of the wrong age group for the product. The personal information is also required to understand the makeup of the group of consumers for statistical purposes and prevent the results being misinterpreted.  
30 For example, the advert placement may have been successful but the registered group of consumers may not contain a significant number of members in the appropriate age category.

Upon registration, each consumer is given an access  
35 address. This may be a personal access address, or may be an access address relating to a particular advertiser, a consumer being given more than one access

address corresponding to more than one advertiser, or more preferably, the consumer is given a single access address and the advertiser can be identified from the identification code. In other embodiments, the access 5 address may be a fairly generic access address, e.g., to a web home page of the database provider (e.g., reactivead.com), and further access address information (possibly in addition to the identification code) may be included in the advertisement. For example, it may be 10 necessary to include the name of the advertiser in addition to an identification code to access the necessary web site. The generic access address may also be a phone prefix number.

The access address may take the form of a phone 15 number, for example, to an operator or automated routing system, e.g. touch tone, voice or similarly operated system. More preferably, the phone number may be just a prefix, e.g. 0xxx or 0xxxx etc., with the identification code providing the remaining digits of the phone number, 20 or at least some of the remaining digits and the rest of the number provided by a further identifier e.g. a PIN (personal identification number) for the consumer. The number may be to a text messaging server (e.g. SMS - short message service) or SMS gateway. The access 25 address may be an URL address, perhaps accessing a home or other page on the website of the database provider. The URL address may be any string of letters, numbers and symbols and may be in a higher or lower address form.

The access address may include an identifier to 30 identify the consumer as he accesses the database provider. In other embodiments, the consumer may be given a password or code which has to be entered in order to identify the consumer. This may be required in 35 addition to the database provider capturing his phone number (say, if phoning using a land line) or MSISDN (if phoning using a mobile phone). In this way, security

can be improved, which may be particularly important if the database provider is offering a range of other services, possibly even credit, at the site.

As mentioned above, the identification code may 5 complete a phone number or route a call or message. It may complete a web address or access a further web page linked to a home page for the database provider. In other preferred embodiments, the identification code which is placed in the advertisement may lead the 10 consumer to the database provider and the access address may direct the message or route the call the last part of the way to an advertiser's site in the database provider's domain.

Thus, viewed from another aspect, the present 15 invention provides a method of collecting information comprising:

setting up a web page at a uniform resource location, said uniform resource location having an address comprising a string of numbers, letters and/or 20 symbols;

placing an advertisement having an identification code corresponding to a portion of the address for the uniform resource location;

issuing an access address to a consumer 25 corresponding to a further portion of said address of said uniform resource location; and

providing a reward to encourage a consumer to access the uniform resource location comprising the access address and the identification code using a 30 communication device to report having found said identification code to try to win said reward.

In the most preferred embodiments, the communication device is a mobile communication device, e.g. a mobile phone, which is capable of accessing the 35 internet and the access address and identification code together form an URL address. Submission of additional codes, e.g., a third or other code (possibly for

security purposes) may be required to arrive at the complete URL address.

From another aspect, the present invention provides a method of collecting information comprising:

5 setting up a phone line to receive a call or message, said phone line having an address comprising a string of numbers, letters and/or symbols;

10 placing an advertisement having an identification code corresponding to a portion of the address for said phone line;

issuing an access address to a consumer corresponding to a further portion of the address for said phone line; and

15 providing a reward to encourage a consumer to dial the phone line comprising said access address and identification code using a communication device to report having found said identification code to try to win said reward.

20 Preferably the communication device is a mobile phone and the codes together (or with additional numbers) form a phone number. The access address may be in the form of a prefix number and the identification number makes up a portion or the remainder of the phone number.

25 Preferably the codes are dialled or entered into the communication device in the order of access address plus identification code, but other embodiments are envisaged where these are dialled or entered the other way around. Advertisements may contain both the 30 identification code and access address and registration of personal details may not occur until after the consumer has accessed the uniform resource location or dialled the phone line to try to win the reward.

35 The identification code may be a one off so that a reward is given on a first come, first served basis. There may be multiple instances of an identification code but strategically or geographically located. The

identification codes may be as part of a set or group of codes, each code being different but requiring the submission of a proportion or set of identification codes to win the prize. The identification codes may 5 have a predetermined lifetime after which they expire. The identification codes may deteriorate / depreciate in value (for example, exponentially as with a radioactivity decay curve) to encourage a faster response on the part of the consumer. The 10 identification numbers may only have a one off use and become invalid after the first (or set number of) instances. This could be used where the aim may be to submit the identification codes in a particular order, to prevent repeated random guesses. It is preferred if 15 the submission of the identification codes is formulated into a game of some kind in order to encourage participation by the consumer.

The term "reward" used herein is not intended to be interpreted strictly in the sense of money or a prize, 20 but in a broad sense, for example, any incentive which may be offered to the consumer to encourage the consumer to submit the identification code. This may take the form of points on a loyalty card, for example, or entitle the consumer to further offers on products. The 25 reward may be in the form of an entry into a lottery, possibly using the identification codes as lottery numbers.

The advertiser may be the database provider. For example, software could be bought or licensed to an 30 advertiser so that it may control the information obtained from the consumer responses. It is more advantageous, however, for the database provider to be a separate entity which specialises in the software and the maintenance of the database, that can then send 35 reports and statistical analysis of the consumer responses to the advertiser.

The present invention therefore extends to cover

software for carrying out any of the methods of collecting information described herein, any writable medium, e.g., disc, drive, memory, RAM, magnetic tape, etc., having such software recorded thereon and to any computer, web site or electronic device including such software. As a result of collecting this information a database of consumer details can be compiled. The present invention therefore also extends to a database having data obtained by a method of collecting information described herein.

The concept of the present invention can be used to build customer loyalty. It can be extended to compliment any reward card scheme currently in use. The registration of personal details could be as part of an application for a loyalty card or could be in addition to this.

Since the consumer has registered with the database provider and can be identified, say, by means of his MSISDN or a PIN (personal identification number), the database provider may also offer other services. For example, there could be a payment and billing system, possibly coupled to a customer loyalty card account. A book marking service to the database provider, advertiser and other sites may also be provided. A reminder service could be provided; since this concept is primarily directed to mobile technology which the consumer would carry around with them. Provision may be made for the consumer to access his account e.g. by the internet, to find out details of rewards gained, discounts available, competition wins or losses, etc. A "swap shop" type service could be provided for consumers to interchange offers / rewards. An auction service could be provided to sell on certain rewards. In the preferred embodiments where the access address takes the consumer to an address on the internet, once the consumer has been identified, the website may be customised to suit the consumer. It may include e-mail

or allow means by which the advertiser can present further adverts to the consumer.

The present concept is a form of interactive consumer advertising, with consumers reacting to an advertisement of any medium, preferably by a mobile device (communicating through an open or proprietary standard) for an incentive or reward. The concept enables all traditional advertising mediums to exact a reaction by preferably mobile technology to provide a tangible level of interaction between the consumer and the retailer / service provider and a way of capturing consumer buying-habits, geo-demographical and statistical information for the advertiser.

In a basic example; a consumer sees a product / service advertised on a bill-board. The consumer is drawn to specific information contained in the advertisement in the form of an identification code, this code is then immediately relayed back to the database provider, advertiser or central hub, via the consumer's mobile device. Receipt of the correct identification code and a personal identifier from the mobile device approves the incentive or reward to be provided. Alternatively the code can be recorded and used later (i.e., by a PDA (personal digital assistant) type or non-mobile device).

The concept provides a unique and scalable opportunity to interact with consumers via current and future mobile communication devices. Due to its simplicity, the concept can work today. It does not require any advances in technology nor changes to industry. From an advertiser's point of view it is simply another promotional campaign to be thought out. It utilises, say, current mobile technology in a usable manner preferably by minimising the interaction time required with the service, yet providing a tangible reward for the consumer. The problems with mobile technology (including WAP devices) are the limitations

in bandwidth, screen and keyboard / keypad sizes, but these will become less so as technology advances. The concept preferably uses the MSISDN of the mobile device as a unique and automatic identifier and simple access addresses to make the service easier to access. "Above the line advertising" is already in very advanced stages of sophistication, but mobile technology is not.

Advances in the latter can only improve the service from both the consumer and advertiser's perspectives i.e.,

10 consumers can receive instant gratification or application through advanced WAP enabled devices, WAP advertisers can gain more accurate customer information through high levels of interaction with the consumer, for example, advertising medium success rates,

15 geographical concentrations of call-to-action, time of day recognition and action times to monitor peoples' life-styles geo-demographical profiles of participant plus a consumer buying habits, and / or global positioning of customer through SIM card / GPS

20 interaction.

Certain preferred embodiments will now be described by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying figures, in which:

25 Figure 1 shows a schematic representation of a first preferred embodiment;

Figure 2 shows a schematic representation of a second preferred embodiment; and

Figure 3 shows a schematic representation of a third preferred embodiment.

30

Example 1

Referring to Figure 1, a consumer registers his personal details with a database provider and is given an access address 1 to contact that database provider, e.g., a web address such as "reactivead.com". A retailer executes a strategic advertising campaign involving national billboard advertising. Certain

posters 2 in the campaign (geographically distributed) contain an identification code 3 from an allocated set of identification codes. The identification code 3 may be a string of numbers and/or letters, e.g., "1234".

5       The advertisement may include details such as the access address 1. The consumer uses his WAP phone 4 to key in the URL (access address 1) and sends the identification code 3 via the internet from his mobile telephone 4.

The consumer is identified from capture of the SIM card number (MSISDN). Submission of the individual identification code 3 entitles the consumer to a discount off a retail product which is sold by the advertiser. Submission of further identification codes 3 entitles the consumer to further discounts.

10      Submission of the complete set of identification codes 3 within a set time frame, as the identification codes 3 are on time expiry, entitles the consumer to a product for free. A database 6 of information is built up from the personal details of the consumer and the

15      advertisements 2 he has responded to.

20

Example 2

Referring now to Figure 2, a travel agent wishes to give a holiday away. They advertise on taxis 7 in London, three of which have an identification code 3 printed on their sides, all three codes being different. Consumers are only given three chances to submit identification codes 3, all of which must be correct to win. The winners are chosen on a first come, first served basis. For the consumer, the process is as follows. A consumer sees one of the taxis 7 and submits the identification code 3, say, on his mobile phone 4 via an SMS message sent to a specific SMS phone number. This identification code 3 activates the consumer (identified by the mobile device (MSISDN number) for inclusion in this particular competition; he now can submit two further tries for the remaining

25

30

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identification codes 3.

Example 3

In Figure 3, a retailer / service provider (e.g., a supermarket company, airline company, etc.) wishes to offer extra free reward points to loyalty card holders who register their acknowledgement of a specific advert 2 by submission of an identification code 3. The consumer uses his mobile or WAP phone 4 to submit the identification code 3 via SMS or URL, as per the above two examples. In doing so, the consumer gains additional loyalty points to be redeemed against future purchases, whereas the retailer / service provider gains valuable information with regard to the success of the advertising campaign.

Other examples are follows:

A fuel station wishes to increase diesel volumes through commercial vehicle and passenger car traffic. A billboard advert is placed on the roadside five miles prior to the site offering drivers a discount off diesel if they send an identification code 3, e.g. "1234", to an access address 1, e.g. phone prefix "0111-fuel" via SMS. On providing proof of this to the retailer, by means of an automatic SMS reply to the consumer's mobile phone 4, the discount is applied directly at the cashier's till.

An on-line game offers a unique weapon to the first 1000 readers of a particular computer magazine who correctly locate the advert 2 and relay back the supplied identification code 3. Pre-registration of e-mail address and mobile phone number may be required as part of the registered personal details. A similar example may use posters at bus stops to target 35 commuters, who would be a prime audience of this type of concept. Strategically positioned posters can maintain an on-going relationship with the target audience.

The concept could also be adapted for use on local radio, offering, say, reduced price on cinema seats / restaurants. The concept could even be adapted to create a lottery type game. The user could "prospect" 5 for the correct access address or identification code to win prize money by dialling different numbers, the longer term returns being gained from cost of calls.

Thus, there has been described a new concept for collecting information and compiling a database of consumer details which utilises modern mobile technology 10 to provide feedback of advertisement placements and advertising campaigns.

Claims:

1. A method of collecting information, comprising:  
for a plurality of consumers, entering personal  
5 details of each consumer into a database of a database provider and issuing each consumer with an access address with which to access the database provider;  
placing an identification code in an advertisement; and  
10 providing a reward to encourage a consumer to find the identification code and report it to the database provider by using the access address and submitting the identification code to try to win the reward.
- 15 2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the consumer is encouraged to submit the identification code to the database provider using a mobile communication device.
- 20 3. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said mobile communication device is a mobile phone.
- 25 4. A method as claimed in claim 2 or 3, wherein said mobile communication device accesses the database provider via the internet.
- 30 5. A method as claimed in claim 2, 3 or 4, wherein the consumer registers his mobile station international subscriber device number as part of his personal details and this number is used to identify the consumer when the database provider is accessed.
- 35 6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the database provider logs the time and location of the consumer when the consumer submits the identification code.

7. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said identification code comprises a string of numbers, a string of letters, a string of numbers and letters, or a bar code.

5

8. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the access address is an address for a uniform resource location or a portion of one.

10

9. A method as claimed in claim 8, wherein said identification code is a portion of an address for a uniform resource location.

15

10. A method as claimed in any of claims 1 to 7, wherein the access address is a telephone number for a telephone line or a portion of one.

11. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said access address is a prefix of a telephone number.

20

12. A method as claimed in claim 10 or 11, wherein said identification code is a portion of a telephone number for a telephone line.

25

13. A method as claimed in any of claims 8 to 12, wherein said access address and said identification code are portions of an address for a uniform resource location or a telephone line.

30

14. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said advertisement is part of an advertising campaign in which advertisements having different identification codes are displayed or played at different locations, the whereabouts of the locations being known to the database provider and / or advertiser (if different).

35

15. A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein submission

of an identification code entitles the consumer to a discount off a retail product.

5       16. A method as claimed in claim 14 or 15, wherein submission of three or more different identification codes entitles the consumer to a retail product for free.

10      17. A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the consumer must submit three or more different identification codes within a set period of time to try to win said reward.

15      18. A method as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13, wherein said advertisement is part of a competition, in which advertisements having different identification codes are displayed, one on each of a plurality of vehicles, and a consumer is required to submit three or more different identification codes to try to win said reward which is in the form of a competition prize.

20      19. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the submission of a first correct identification code entitles the consumer to submit two further identification codes which must also be correct to win.

25      20. A method as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13, wherein said advertisement is part of an advertising campaign in which a plurality of advertisements are displayed or played having the same identification code.

30      21. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said advertisement is associated with a loyalty card scheme and submission of said identification code entitles a consumer to additional points that are credited to a loyalty card account of the consumer which can be redeemed against future purchases.

22. A method of collecting information comprising:  
setting up a web page at a uniform resource  
location, said uniform resource location having an  
address comprising a string of numbers, letters and / or  
5 symbols;  
placing an advertisement having an identification  
code corresponding to a portion of the address for the  
uniform resource location;  
issuing an access address to a consumer  
10 corresponding to a further portion of said address of  
said uniform resource location; and  
providing a reward to encourage a consumer to  
access the uniform resource location comprising said  
access address and said identification code using a  
15 communication device to report having found said  
identification code to try to win said reward.
23. A method as claimed in claim 22, wherein the web  
page is provided by a database provider and the consumer  
20 is encouraged to access the uniform resource location of  
the database provider using a mobile communication  
device that can communicate via the internet.
24. A method as claimed in claim 22 or 23, wherein the  
25 consumer enters into said communication device, said  
access address, said identification code and a further  
code to complete the address of said uniform resource  
location.
- 30 25. A method as claimed in claim 24, wherein said  
further code is a personal identification number  
allocated to the consumer.
- 35 26. A method as claimed in claim 24, wherein said  
further code is a name used by the advertiser.
27. A method of collecting information comprising:

setting up a telephone line to receive a call or message, said telephone line having an address comprising a string of numbers, letters and / or symbols;

5 placing an advertisement having an identification code corresponding to a portion of the address for said telephone line;

10 issuing an access address to a consumer corresponding to a further portion of the address for said telephone line; and

15 providing a reward to encourage a consumer to dial the telephone line comprising said access address and identification code using a communication device to report having found said identification code to try to win said reward.

28. A method as claimed in claim 27, wherein the telephone line is operated by a database provider and the consumer is encouraged to contact the database provider by calling or sending a message to the database provider using a mobile communication device.

29. A method as claimed in claim 23 or 28, wherein the consumer registers certain personal details with the database provider which are entered into a database.

30. A method as claimed in any of claims 22 to 29, wherein the time and location of the consumer is logged when the consumer accesses the uniform resource location or dials said telephone line.

31. A method as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein said advertisement comprises a poster.

35 32. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein a consumer is allocated an account which can be accessed via the internet to enable the consumer to find out

about the reward(s) which he has won.

33. A method as claimed in claim 32, wherein additional services are offered to the consumer such as swapping or  
5 auctioning a reward.

34. A method of collecting information as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein a database of consumer information is compiled from the information collected.  
10

35. A database of consumer information collected by a method described in any preceding claim.

36. A method of collecting information substantially as  
15 hereinbefore described with reference to Figure 1,  
Figure 2 or Figure 3 of the accompanying drawings.

37. A method of compiling a database of consumer information substantially as hereinbefore described with  
20 reference to Figure 1, Figure 2 or Figure 3 of the accompanying drawings.

38. A method of advertising to collect consumer information substantially as hereinbefore described with  
25 reference to Figure 1, Figure 2 or Figure 3 of the accompanying drawings.



Application No: GB 0014013.7  
Claims searched: 1-38

Examiner: Keith Sylvan  
Date of search: 9 February 2001

**Patents Act 1977**  
**Search Report under Section 17**

**Databases searched:**

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.S): G4A (AUXF)

Int Cl (Ed.7): G06F 17/60

Other: Online: WPI,EPODOC,PAJ

**Documents considered to be relevant:**

| Category | Identity of document and relevant passage                | Relevant to claims |
|----------|--|--------------------|
| A        | US5855369 Lieberman. See the abstract.                   | -                  |
| A        | NL1007644C Netgate BV. See the WPI abstract 2000-145694. | -                  |

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